

**Tennessee State Board of Education High Quality Instructional
Leadership Professional Development Policy
State Board Approved on Final Reading - January 2009**

Effective learning-centered instructional leaders must be committed to lifelong, self-directed learning. They must have a deep understanding of how students learn and to what level they can learn. They must understand how adults learn and how to create a professional learning environment where all adults are constantly improving their own knowledge and skills. He or she must put curriculum and instruction first. A learning-centered leader understands what students should be learning and how 21st century students learn best. Learning-centered instructional leaders require access to top notch professional development (PD) experiences.

Professional development is more than an in-service training or workshop. A professional development system must include a variety of formats that are well conceived, current and relevant professional learning opportunities. All PD experiences must be developed, delivered and lead to measurable, standards based outcomes. Offerings should be evaluated for effectiveness and revised often to ensure the learning remains relevant to the responsibilities of today's instructional leaders.

Professional development experiences should provide participants with information about which of the Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards (TILS) and indicators are being addressed and at which licensure level. Professional development information should provide clear learning goals so instructional leaders are able to make thoughtful selections that will align with their personal professional growth plans, performance contract goals, school improvement planning goals and/or their performance evaluation. Developing an individual instructional leader's professional growth plans requires careful analysis of school data, evaluation feedback and licensure requirements.

Currently instructional leaders must engage in state approved professional development to satisfy the professional growth requirement stipulated in evaluation. Evidence of meeting the standards is required to maintain or to progress to another licensure tier. Demonstrations of competency and evidence of meeting a more advanced level of TILS indicator(s) is required for instructional leaders to advance through the Beginning Instructional Leaders (BIL), Professional Instructional Leader (PIL), the Exemplary Instructional Leader (EIL) licenses and mentorship.

High quality instructional leadership professional development criteria

All professional development should be designed to meet the following criteria:

- link to the Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards and indicators of progress;
- increase a principal's and school leadership teams' capacities to improve teaching and learning ;
- incorporate the use of 21st century skills;
- ensure that support and training is high quality and research-based;

- monitor and evaluate leaders' and/or leadership teams' progress in using new skills and new knowledge;
- encourage interactions between exemplars or mentors and participants.

The purpose of professional development is to assist instructional leaders and their leadership teams to determine the current state of teaching and learning in their schools and to improve their knowledge, skills and performance to move the school to the next level of learning.

High Quality Instructional Leader Professional Development Guidelines:

Professional development must be standards-based.

The Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards (TILS) are the basis for all professional development experiences for school leaders. The standards-based professional development must be rigorous and engaging so that each school leader who successfully completes the curriculum will acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to meet or exceed expectations of the standards.

Professional development must be results-driven.

Professional development must actively engage school leaders in their required work and be directly tied to their performance contracts and/or evaluation requirements. The results of the leaders' implementation of new learning should be evidenced through representative samples of their work and be directly related to the Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards. Examples might include the results of analysis of student data, samples from their teacher evaluation or walk-through processes, and demonstration of activities designed toward the induction and mentoring of new teachers. Most notably, results-driven professional development adds individual accountability beyond mandatory attendance at a prescribed number of professional development hours.

Professional development provides for continuous improvement of the school.

The purpose of ongoing professional development for school leaders is to increase student academic achievement. This is achieved when school leaders actively engage in professional learning, developing strategies for promoting continuous progress on high priority school improvement goals.

Professional development links research and practice and must be embedded in the day-to-day work.

Professional learning must incorporate the research on effective schools and classrooms with the practical experiences of successful school leaders. As a result, school leaders will develop the essential knowledge and experience to place students at the center of the school community, where students are engaged in meaningful work. These leaders will develop expertise in providing the resources necessary for improved student achievement while managing time and other conditions requisite for providing an environment conducive to successful student learning. This type of professional development will help leaders to research the distinguishing characteristics of schools that "close the achievement gap" and will ensure that the application of that action-research is at the center of their discussions, activities, and networking.

Professional development must address individual needs, occur over time, and provide for collaborative learning.

Professional development must be organized to meet the needs of adult learners and school leaders as they progress over time—from beginning leaders to professional leaders, and ultimately toward becoming exemplary leaders. Therefore, professional development is a long term process and embodies the value of life-long learning. As a consequence professional development must represent a range of carefully organized experiences focused on a leader's current needs, with an understanding that such needs will evolve over time. These professional learning opportunities work best among a cohort of school leaders in order to promote networking and varied perspectives. Additionally, the professional development will emphasize collaboration (face-to-face, electronically, or other technological means) with experienced school leaders (and teacher-leaders) who serve as mentors, coaches, or critical friends.

Each school and school leader have different strengths, needs, opportunities, and barriers. Instructional leaders must become reflective as well as self-directive in aligning their professional learning with their current needs and situation. Professional development requires a careful and flexible design that will best meet the individual leader's needs.

Professional development must be data-driven, founded on both formative and summative data.

The professional development of instructional leaders must be evaluated on a formative and summative basis. Data must be generated from a variety of sources so that professional development can be focused on the specific needs of the instructional leader and the use of new knowledge and skills that directly impact student learning. Data must also be utilized in the evaluation of program outcomes.